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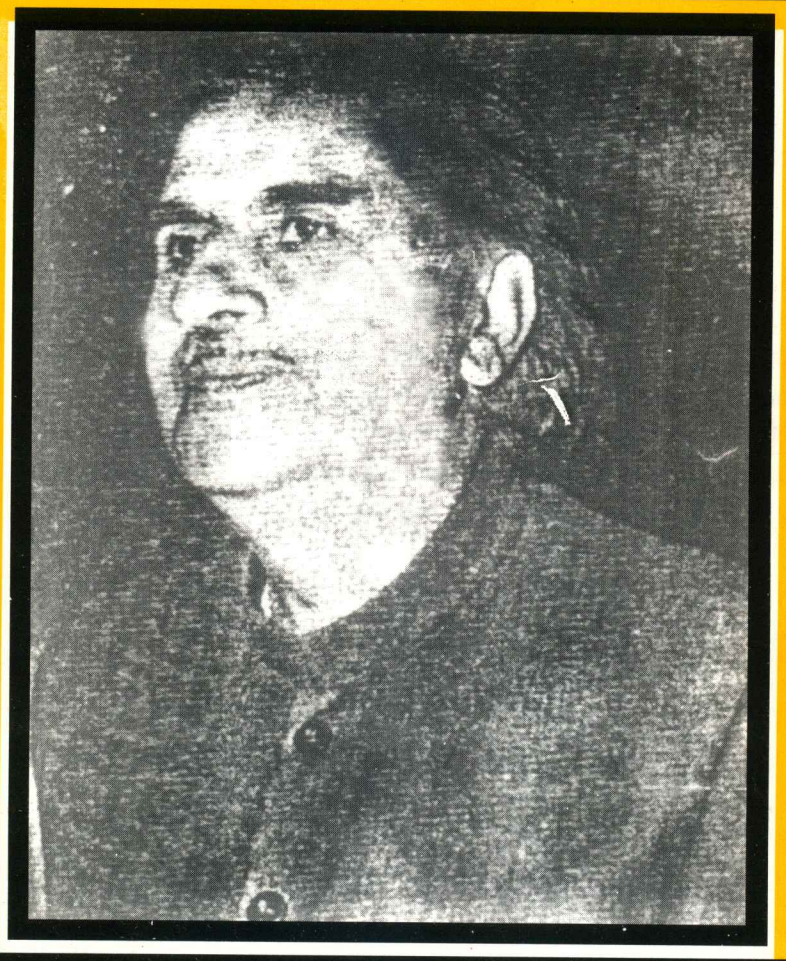

Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim'

Courtesy : Urdu monthly, Akademi (Srinagar), Vol. 11, No. 1, 1988
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नीलमतम्

Research Journal of Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute

NADIM FOUNDATION

The historic happening of the Foundation after the literary genius of Kashmir was founded on 7th April 2008. The inaugural function took place in the auditorium of Sahitya Akadmi, New Delhi, where the Kashmiri literati and intellectuals graced the occasion, besides lots of Kashmiri from the neighbouring town of Faridabad. Various knowledgeable personalities and intellectuals of Nadim's contemporainty paid glowing tributes to this literary genius who brought literary and poetic forms and the language at par with the national and international literary forms. He was hailed as the path finder of Kashmiri poesy, poetics and literature. Nadim's ancestral home was in Sheshyar, II-bridge in Srinagar. He was born on 18th March 1916. At the tender age of eight years he lost his father Shankar Kaul, and was left to the care of his mother Sokhamal. She had to labour throughout her life on the spinning wheel to bring up orphaned Dina Nath, and also educate him.

In later years, in order to augment the laboured earnings, Dina Nath had to earn through petty tuitions even before passing his matriculation in the year 1929. He joined as a teacher in New Era High School in 1937. He established Hindu High School in the year 1940. The same, year he graduated and did his Bachelor of Teaching (B.T.) in 1945. The years between 1938-40 were decisive in formulating his political career, when he was deeply influenced by revolutionary hero Bhagat Singh. Nadim organized first public meeting in the year 1938, demanding the Responsible Government. His house was searched; all his poems confiscated and was jailed for three months. His first poems appeared in S.P. College magazine, Partap, in 1940, 1946 and 1948. The take-off stage to fame was from 1949 onwards when he bulldozed the highways for literature in general and for poetry in particular. His achievements through quick strides went snowballing, turning into an avalanche of literary enlightenment.

Besides being a poet, Nadim has a thick cluster of plumes in his headgear. By profession a pedagogue, he envisioned a broad arena wherein an extensive drive for education could be floated. As back as in 1943 he was responsible for the establishment of educational institutions of Gandhi Memorial College and Lal Ded Memorial Higher Secondary School, of which he remained, the Principal from 1963 to 1965; and again in 1969. He founded All Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Teacher's Association, became its first President, and by virtue of that became the member of the Legislative Council. Founder and General Secretary, J&K State Peace Council (1950), and member Indian Peace Conference (1951-1952). Delegate to China with All India Peace Council. Soviet Land Nehru Award and tour to Russia (1971). Leading Member and Executive, National Cultural Congress (1949), and General Secretary Progressive Writer's Association. Founded the Kashmiri organ Kong Posh, of the Congress; and remained its editor (1949-1957). In New Delhi: —

Kalhana Award for Literature 1984. Member

National Federation of Progressive Writer's Association (1986)

Sahitya Akadmi Award (1985).

"Nadim the Legend that was, that is and that will ever be."

- P. N. K.

MODERN CULTURAL MOVEMENT IN KASHMIR

- P. N. Kachru

The word *culture* commands a vast field. Besides the Fine Arts, it covers the areas like the mode of social living, costume, ornamentation, etc. ; but the subject I am dealing in this treatise is only Fine Arts.

The modern cultural movement of Kashmir is the direct outcome of the immediate period of post independence when the incursion from Pakistan took place. In order to maintain the peaceful and undisturbed life of citizens, and in order to keep their moral upbeat, it was decided by the then political leadership to formulate cultural troops for the mobilization of Peace Brigades and inculcate amongst them the spirit of defense and patriotism. My colleague and close friend late *Somnath Kaul (Bira)*[1] and *myself* were entrusted with the job of establishing a cultural unit (both of us belonged to the left wing of the National Conference). Here it will not be out of place to remember my close colleague and pay my homage to Somnath, who became the first martyr for defending against the communal elements in Jammu province.

We got a letter from Gulam Mohammad Sadiq who happened to be the chief administrator of Emergency Government, to relieve and transfer the duty of one *Prem Nath Sadhu (Pardesi)*, who was a well known Urdu short story writer. He was working as Mahaldar in *Customs and Excise* Dpartment. Thus (myself and Pardesi) established the basic cultural unit in a small room of a hotel in *Lal-Chowk*. Later on the hotel (then *Coronation Hotel*) was completely occupied by the Peace Brigades.

Although a half-hearted effort was taken, back in the year 1941, to establish a unit of Progressive Writer's Association[2], but it could not prove successful under the repressive policy of the state. The first meeting of this unit took place in the ancestral house of the then noted short story writer, Prem Nath 'Pardesi'. Those who participated besides Pardesi were, Ramanand 'Sagar', Veer Visheshwar, Somnath Zutshi and Shahid (I don't remember the full name).

However, the revival of the effort was again necessitated by the emergent political situation caused by the incursion of Pakistan. It was early November 1947 that the first patriotic songs of peace, patriotism and defense; composed by "Pardesi", came out and peace brigades were marching with the song of *Kadam Kadam Badenge Hum, Mahaaz Par Ladenge Hum*[3]..... A big poster was devised by me depicting a huge liberation of Baramulla town. Soon after a few days a huge illustration, portraying the leadership, was offered by one Somnath Khosa[4], a Kashmiri artist from Lahore. This remained exhibited on the facade of Palladium Talkies in Lal Chowk.

There was a general people's mobilization of Peace-Brigades ; and under this enthusiasm the cultural movement became a source of active expression of this upsurge. The cultural talent also got a shaking from their dormant slumber after hearing of the fervour for the cultural activity. Thus a group of theatrical enthusiasts called in our room. The notable of them were Mohanlal Aima, Pran Kishore[5], both theatrical enthusiasts who joined the unit. One day Dr. Apurab Somnath dropped in with his colleague Prof. Mahmood Hashmi[6] who presented us his manuscript of a play[7]

in Urdu, depicting the atrocities and the resistance of Kashmiris.

It was in mid-December 1947, that the rising volunteer-ship of Peace Brigades could not be housed into the hotel building, so the entire contingent was shifted to the barracks of Exhibition Grounds ; and along with this move we also shifted the cultural unit and occupied a long wing for our activities.

The cultural unit was then re-christened as National Cultural Front. The front got considerably extended as more and more dormant artists sprouted out and volunteered to join the Front. A group of folk-songsters and musicians from Badgam Tehsil led by Abdul Gani Namtahali and Habib Ullah Rabab-Nawaz joined and added great colour to the activities.

This entire organization was necessitated to be properly shaped, catagorized and regimented. It was divided into four units.....

1. Art section, mainly run and managed by myself and Somnath Khosa[8], who after working for a few months, left for Delhi in search for his greener pastures. So the section remained a one man unit of activity.

2. Then there was the Writers Unit, led by Premnath Sadhu 'Pardesi'. This section comprised of noted Kashmiri Poets and writers like Gulam Mohd. 'Mahjoor', Gulam Hassan Beg 'Arif', Somnath Zutshi, Tej Kishan Bhan, Kaisar Qalander, Noor Mohd. 'Roshan', Abdul Haq 'Barq' and Shridhar Joo Raina 'Zaar'.

3. The third unit comprised of Theatrical artists..... notable amongst them being Mohanlal Aima[9], Pran Kishore, Shyam ji Bakaya, D.N. Bakaya, Pushkar Bhan and Noor Mohd. 'Roshan'[10]. The educated and progressive women, Usha Kashyap and Mrs. Prankishore rendered a significant contribution to theatre, being active female actors.

4. The fourth unit consisted of singers and musicians. This unit mainly consisted of Abdul Gani Namtahali, Habib Ullah Rabab-Nawaz, Mohanlal Aima, Zoona Begam and Raj Begum.

The significant milestones :-

The Indian intelligentsia members of Indian Progressive Writer's Association and Indian People's Theatrical Association (IPTA) gave an encouraging response to this cultural rejuvenation. Well known progressive writers like Bawant Gargi, Ramanand Sagar, Rajendra Singh Bedi——all Urdu writers——Shivdan Singh Chauhan (Hindi Writer) and Ms. Sheila Bhatia from IPTA came to strengthen and encourage this movement. Amongst them Sheila Bhatia and S.S. Chauhan stayed back to work in the Front. The well known painter S.H. Raza arrived in July 1948 and up to the end of September'48. his aesthetic sensibilities, style and technical excellence was my first eye-opener into the domain of formal ideality.

In early 1948 Mr. D.N. Nadim appeared on the cultural arena ; and through subsequent years of the movement became a cultural stalwart who excavated new roads towards cultural excellence and gave creative form to Kashmiri literature.

A unique and creative dimension was given to the theatrical art by introducing *Shadow Play,* where the passing shadows, their action and mimicry played against a plane white curtain. This was a new stride that for the first time rendered an aesthetic element to the hackneyed craft of so called theatre of Kashmir. The lonely contributor and creator of this medium was Ms. Sheila Bhatia, a well known activist of IPTA, who

devotedly and untiringly created a shadow play titled *Naye Kashmir Ki Rah Par.*

The rest of theatrical performance remained still wrapped with sheets of hackney forms prevalent on the popular Indian scene. Of course, there was a radical change of content and theme in accordance with the changed socio-political condition. Titles like *Kashmir Yeh Hai, Savaali* and *Teen Bolta Chaar* (a drama on agrarian freedom), were the common titles which were essentially of propaganda value than of theatrical art. Previously this stifled form was in vogue in the valley, patronized and practiced by semi-educated elements who generally would present religious *Kathas* from *Ramayana and Mahabharata.* Also stories like *Raja Harishchandra, Krishan Sudaama,* love stories of *Laila-Majnoo* also were staged occasionally.

Right from early twentieth century the *Three important centres* had come up with classical and imposing theatres which remained active till the advent of Talkies and Cinema Houses, especially *Palladium Talkies*[11]. There existed a theatre in Rainawari, one in Baramulla and a major one at Amira Kadal (First Bridge)[12].

On the popular front there existed no such theatrical activity ; but the masses at large had their own means of artistic expression and entertainment. This activity chiefly existed in the village-side. They had their own village and Commune gatherings in the open (generally on eventide) performing mimicries, rendering folk tales in song and popular verses[13]. Well-known centre at village *Vahlhor* in Badgam Tehsil came up and formulated a community of folk performers. This community was popularly known as *Baand,* and their performances were termed *Baand Pather.* These village performers were creative in essence whose expressions in reality presented the popular throbbing and popular emotions. There developed a regular community of these people's actors (Baands), who got a due recognition in post-1947 period. There existed a Subhan Bhagat who later on developed it into a folk theatre which became known as *Bhagat Theatre*[14].

In Kulgam and Anantnag districts (south Kashmir) there exist folk performances about the wild life, wherein the jungle creatures form the castle. Each actor dons the attribute of an animal and then presents the wild life and the human attitude and relationship with wild creatures. Most popular performance of the region is called *Braaga Pather*[15]. Its popularity extends even across the neighbouring *Simthan Range* to Kishtwar region also. The only creative folk-dance form that exists in the valley is popularly known as *Damaali.* The wondering professionals, who hail from well-known village of *Pakharpore*[16], situated in the foot hills of south-western valley, perform the dance that can be safely compared to a far better version of modern day dances of *Shake-the leg etc.* that is popular to-day in television programs and in five star banquet halls.

Against this traditional background, the introduction of *Shadow Play* was a unique and new technical form, introduced by the *National Cultural Front* under the leadership of Ms. Sheila Bhatia (of IPTA fame). It imparted a positive colour and embellishment to the Kashmiri theatrical tradition. The play was first staged in the Exhibition Ground Theatre hall and later on repeated many times in various sectors of the city.

Taking into consideration the achievements of other sections (Writers, Songsters and Art section), there were no achievements in aesthetic and formal aspects, excepting the political exploitation

and regimentation ; and production of propaganda posters.

After having led the Art section for more than six months, and having worked under the suffocating unaesthetic conditions of regimentation, I resolved to pursue my creative activity. Thus I left the front on 31st May 1948 after having a chance meeting with my old college colleague Triloke Kaul and also with Mr. S.N. Butt. They sought a meeting to have some rapport, as they also were fiddling with brush and paint. I was thrilled with this three-some championship. When I chanced to drop in Triloke Kaul's house, I was thrilled to see the prospect of his creative expressions. Then there was no looking back till our movement thrived, established and got the national recognition for becoming partners in building the modern national movement. The story of this movement is, in detail, separately appended to the story of cultural movement.

After months of intense deliberation amongst the three (Kachru, Kaul and Butt)[17], we thought of breaking the prevailing ice of aesthetic poverty and political regimentation and start a movement for creative activity.

Those days, now the famous artist, S.H. Raza, happened to be in the valley whom we met and then arranged his residence in the neighbourhood of Mr. S.N. Butt. This provided a chance to be in constant exchange with his ideas and the style of his expressions. It was an auspicious championship that threw open for us the floodgates to peep into the surge of beauty and the means of its achievements ; thus strengthening our resolve to pursue the track.

In early month of June 1948, the trio formally met at no. 6-Wazir Bagh, where S.H. Raza, S.S. Chauhan (writer) and Sheila Bhatia of IPTA fame also joined the observers. Thus the Progressive Artist's Association came into being[18].

The establishment of radio station in Srinagar attracted some of the leading talents of Cultural Front. Mohanlal Aima, Pran Kishore, Pushkar Bhan, Premnath Pardesi, Abdul Haq Barq and Gulam Hass Beg Arif, though joined the service of Radio Kashmir, but continued their active partnership to the Front. Despite their continuance, lessening of their participation was apparent, but their strength of conviction kept them strongly with the Front.

The conclusion of the month of December 1948 saw suddenly and mysteriously the closure of the Front, leaving the entire talent in distress and in disarray. It was strongly rumoured that the non-artist political managers of the Front who were managing the financial subsidies from the government, had misappropriated and embezzled the funds. The rank-and-file became anxious, that the next step to be taken might be to destroy the papers and account records by the traitors, in order to escape any possible investigation. Noor Mohd. 'Roshan', poet, theatrical activist and a sincere member apprised me of the situation, and both of us came to conclusion that by any means all the records and account books should be out of the reach and should remain in custody of the chairman[19] of the Front. We managed to salvage all the records which remained in the custody of the President, who in turn constituted a committee of experts to scrutinize the records and prepare reports of the findings.

After the hectic deliberation of the members, under the chairmanship of the President, it was decided to take possession of the precincts of the Front, and restart the cultural activity. Consequently, on 15th of May 1949 the whole gathering of the activists met in the Exhibition Grounds

under the leadership of its President and physically occupied the premises to re-organize and re-commence the activities.

In the very first meeting the committee of financial experts submitted their reports, which revealed a glaring and misappropriation and embezzlement of funds. The culprits, were condemned and ousted from the brotherhood.

In another meeting a decision for broad-based and liberal approach was taken with accent and emphasis on creative, aesthetic and human culture for the expression of all artistic activities. The tendencies of political bias and regimentation was abrogated, so that the liberal and non political elements could participate and give a liberal expression to their creative feelings. This broad based and aesthetically oriented approach enamoured many of the veterans of the literary and creative field into the fold. In fact, it was with this re-orientation of the policy which opened an expensive vista that enfolded the entire Kashmiri literary into the fold. An array of litterateurs, writers and poets thronged in to the movement. Here it wont be out of place to give them a place of prominence, and those who joined were the well-known linguists and lexicographer, Professor S.K. Toshkhani[20]. Well-known professor and litterateur J.L. Kaul, who after his tenure of professorship became the secretary of the state Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. He is the first intellectual who brought Kashmiri poetry on the international scene. Prof. A.N. Raina, the prominent geographer who gave us the first comprehensive Geographical hook of the state of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The group of Poets, Mahjoor, Arif, Roshan and Kaisar Kalander and D.N. Nadim were reinforced by a host of ports and Prof. Nandlal Kaul 'Talib', who had excelled in the poetic craft in Persian and Urdu languages. Master Zinda Kaul in whose compositions appeared the first the first sparks of change from the hacknyed imitations of the Persianized form and style. Kashmiri poets Rehman 'Rahi', Amin 'Kamil', Rashid 'Nazki', Arjun Dev 'Majboor', Amar Chand 'Wali', Prem Nath 'Premi', Makhanlal 'Bekas', Chamanlal 'Chaman',Prithvinath Kaul 'Saayil', Dina Nath Wali 'Almast' and a couple of women writers, namely Nirmal 'Kusum' Peshin/ Kachru and Ms. Shakuntala Razdan, both from Young Writers Association joined with the host of the poets.

Adding strength to the lone rangers, Premnath Pardesi, Somnath Zutshi and Tej Bahadur Bhan, in came the short story writers Bansi 'Nirdosh', Umesh Kaul, Ali Mohd. Lone, T.N. Dhar 'Kundan' and Haridai Kaul 'Bharti'. The music and song section got ornamented by a significant personality named Jagan Nath Shivpuri, a Kashmiri veteran of Indian classical music[21]. The already existing theatrical activists got an important addition of folk-theatre talent and expert Motilal Kemu[22].

After well consolidated and broad-based formation covering almost whole cultural ethos of the valley, a two-day conference took place on 3rd and 4th July of the year 1949.the organization was re-christened as the National Cultural Congress. The structure became a combination of three units..... the Writers unit, Theatrical unit and Song and Music unit. The unit of the Artists (painters) joined under special terms, conditions and independent programs, as this group by then already built the movement as Progressive Artist's Association. It already had adopted its own manifesto and constitution. Consequently it was agreed upon to co-operate and function untidily with its own autonomous position and its own title, manifesto and

constitution. For a united function , it was decided by the association to establish its independent office in one of the rooms of National Congress. It was made mandatory for all the four units to meet at least once a week for their respective programs and activities.

Immediately followed the first two day conference of this organization. The main purpose of this conference was to take this cultural movement amongst the people. Consequently a *mushaira* and a music-and song programme was presented in the public park[23] which attracted the vast section of citizens and nearby villages. A one-day exhibition also was thrown open to present the New movement to the public.

The devoted and regular activity of the organization for a period of one-and-half years (sixteen months) broadened the arena of intellectual activity, which attracted into the fold almost whole of the creative literary. This necessitated the broadening of the executive committee. In order to review the progress, a second conference of the Cultural Congress took place in October 1950. the executive committee was reshaped in order to broaden the representation to the intelligentsia and the literary. The Executive Committee was expanded and reshaped with G.M. Sadiq as President. Justice J.L. Kilam, G.M. Mahjoor and Abdul 'Raahat' vice-presidents ; followed by D.N. Nadim general secretary, Sheila Bhatia[24] as secretary and Ms. Mahmooda Ahmed Ali as treasurer. The three members representing the Writers, the Theatre, Song-and-drama division and the Artists were A. Rehman 'Raahi', Noor Mohd. 'Roshan' and S.N. Butt respectively.

The Creative Era :— The period between May 1949 to 1952 headed by National Cultural Congress were the years during which the Kashmiri Literature got enriched with the birth of its literary, aesthetic, formal and creative aspects, leaving behind the dark ages of hacknyed and cheap immitative alien verse-mongarings of thaught and eulogisation. The introduction of new forms of *couplet, sonnet, free verse* and *dramatic monologue* came into existance. This aesthetic revolution was founded and heralded by none other than *Dinanath Nadim.* His form of couplets were after *Lalla's (Lal Ded)* tradition of *Vaaks* which were didactic in content and a four-line stanza in their form ; and contentwise being stress-full than the quantity. Not only the introduction of new poetic forms, *Nadim* layed the foundation of Kashmiri short stories as well. His titles of *Jawabi Card* and *Sheena Peto-Peto* were the surprising begenings of a new chapter in kashmiri literature. These attempts layed the foundation to discover the potentalities in the language for the serious writings than the prevelant use of odinary conversations. The search for new words and phrases and gejuvenating and highlighting the dormant old verse and native colloquial ideoms and expressions, all this was necessitated for the expansive canvas of prose writings.

The poet *Rehman Rahi* was the immediate follower who took the inspiration from *Nadim.* His deft and dexterous Kashmiri translation of Maxim Gorky's short story *A Man Was Born,* was a successful attempt for what *Nadim* laid the foundation. An array of writers who immediately followed were, *Amin Kamil, Somnath Zutshi, Akthar Mohi-ud-Din, Ali Mohd. Lone, Noor Mohd. Roshan, Abdul Aziz Haroon* and *Hridai Kaul 'Bharti'.*

Again it was *Nadim* who laid the foundations of modern Kashmiri Theatre. His introduction of *Opera,* the theatricals of music, song and poetry eroded the

hackneyed forms and feudalistic themes and imparted rhythm, vibration, zest and ecstasy into the spirits of both the actor and the spectator. His most popular opera *Narcissus and Bumble-Bee* took people by surprise, with hypnotic emotions and rhythms. *Nadim* based it on the traditional theme of love between Narcissus and Bumble-bee who eternally in separation. Narcissus (female according to Kashmiri tradition), which is the early spring visitor in the garden, but the Bee is the summer visitor. So the Narcissus pines in waiting till the spring passes away while the Bumble-Bee in summer moans and desperately tosses its head against the branches and trunks of the garden while in search for its Love. Its lady-love would patiently and silently wait for Love to arrive in the garden, but the violent gusts of wind took away the delicate one from its stalk. *Nadim's* revolutionary social content adds to this traditional romantic pathos, and converts it into an optimistic romance of fulfillment and consummation of love. The other flowers and birds of the garden unite against the destructive wind and thus make it possible to protect the Narcissus till the arrival of Bumble-Bee.

The opera took people of the valley off their feet from their dark dungeons and breath the fresh mid-air of music, dance and optimism. It crossed the boundaries of the valley and became the national rage. The opera permeated the international psyche when the visiting Russian leaders Nikita Khruschev and Bulganin saw the opera. Later on it became a popular opera in Russia.

The new socialist optimism, no doubt, was the Post-Independence feature which aroused new hopes of social well-being. The history gave to this concept a transitory nature and had to become a remote idea. But what remained, was the new and powerful operatic form that *Nadim* gave which left an indelible mark on Kashmiri Theatre. *Nadim* added many operatic theatricals to this class.

For the first time, the Cultural Congress started a journal *Kong Posh* in Kashmiri, which laid vitalizing foundations for the Linguistic and Lexical expansions of Kashmiri prose and style. Besides, it became a powerful vehicle for popularizing the language amongst the people in general but amongst the literary in particular.

CONCLUSION

The aesthetic foundations laid by *Nadim* got a broader platform when in post-1953 era Radio Kashmir took up the cue. Most of the cultural literati had shifted their partial activity to the broadcasting media for broader cultural propagation but for their economic interests as well. However, it is the irrefutable fact that through this agency Kashmiri prose writing took great strides in broadcasting *news and commentaries, talks on culture and current affairs ; subjects of literary, social, political and scientific nature* were also dealt with. *Skits and stories, plays and features, discussions and recitals* were put on the air. Elements of *humour, satire, irony and sarcasm* were developed through the broadcasting programs. Thus the prose of various kinds- descriptive, narrative, expository and emotive, were developed.

Thus the Kashmiri literary forms, which were founded and heralded by literary genius, had come of age, and could move shoulder-to-shoulder along with other national and provincial languages.

Contrary to these formalistic achievements the social content had taken a drastic change. The earlier enthusiasm for socialist positivism had waned away and writers ceased to be socio-political enthusiasts.

There was disillusionment and frustration for having been betrayed by those who professed socialist ideals for their selfish ends. There occurred total withdrawal and intellect seemed weaving a cocoon around its own self. The sobering down of the muse, gentle rhetoric of verse and introversion predominated over the literary and intellectual content. There occurred absolute withdrawal into the Sell. Social aloofness of the intellect left far behind the growing degeneration of society.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Somnath Kaul (Bira) left with contingent of Peace Brigade led by Dr. Apurab Somnath, to propagate against the communal elements in Jammu province. He became the direct target of communalists and was killed while traversing through Bhadravah-Doda regions. He was my neighbour in Ghat Rainawari, Srinagar.

2. The Indian Progressive Writer's movement was the left-oriented anti-imperialist intellectual movement in which leading writers like Krishan Chander, Sadat Hassan Mantoo, Sardar Jafri, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mulk Raj Anand, Sahir Ludhianvi and Balwant Gargi and many others were enthusiastically popularizing the movement. Ramanand Sagar was the latest introductory, who being a Kashmiri, helped in organizing the Kashmir unit.

3. This song was composed by Pardesi and was sung by late P.N.Jalali while reading the Peace Brigades through the streets of Srinagar. Then Mr. Jalali was a powerful political leader and crusader of State national movement.

4. Mr. Somnath Khosa was a Kashmiri commercial artist settled in Lahore. He served as an advertising artist in Civil and Military Gazette ; but later on he set up his own commercial studio. During late summer of the year 1947 he was commissioned by the Punjab University to paint Kashmir landscapes for a book-publication. He got stranded due to Punjab communal disturbances followed by the fateful partition. He lost his property which was looted and burned . He worked voluntarily in the art section of National Cultural Front, but left for Delhi in late summer 1948. In Srinagar he had his ancestral home in Sayed-Ali-Akbar, Fateh Kadal.

5. Pran Kishore possessed good amount of acting experience, which he had gained by stage acting during his studentship in S.P. College where he used to participate in cultural activities.

6. Later Mahmood Hashmi joined the Peace Brigade led by Dr. Apurab Somnath. In Jammu, Hashmi gave a slip and crossed, along with it 303 rifle to Sialkot.

7. The title of the drama was *Kashmir Yeh Hai,* which became very popular.

8. Somnath Khosa happened to be the father of well-known painter Kashmiri Khosa who is settled in Delhi.

9. Mohanlal Aima, besides being a theatrical artist, had a great singing talent ; and by virtue of that would contribute a lot to the Singing Squad of the Front.

10. Noor Mohamad Roshan, besides being a poet, had a great flair for acting. He substantially contributed to the theatrical activity.

11. The Palladium Talkies became operative in 1930, but the other cinema—Regal, was restricted for Europeans and British Officials only.

12. The theatre at Amira Kadal (Maisuma) was located in an empty area, beginning from the fork opposite Exchange Road and culminating near present Badshah Chowk. This area of the theatre having a seating capacity for about four hundred spectators. The one at Baramulla was activated by the officials of gazetted rank. In that respect it was chiefly a center for, so called, literati.

13. These tales were recited in a typical form with the refrain typical of Kashmir village.

14. A well-known cultural enthusiast, Mr. Motilal Kemu, who showed great interest in folk theatre, worked devotedly and conducted a research in folk form and imparted a great improvement. He is still, though in exile, in touch and works constantly for this folk tradition. It was in 2004 that he led this group to Delhi to participate in the National Drama Festival.

15. Braag word is the Kashmiri derivative of Sanskrit word Bragya, which means a lion. The performance presents the role of a lion in relation to other forest creatures, and human sympathy with them.

16. This is a quiet and sleeping village in the south-west direction, about six miles away from the Ziarat of Cherari-Sharief. The village has its own Ziarat where a popular 'mela' takes place. The devotees to the Ziarat are a well known set of Sufis called Fakirs, who hold Bhandaars for weeks together. The Damaal dancers in question are mainly the followers of this Ziarat.

17. This group, later, became popular as the Trio, the three working, moving and loitering together.

18. Read *the Modern Art Movement in Kashmir* by P.N. Kachru, (Neelamatam, vol. 2, no.2, Nov. 2004).

19. Mr. Gulam Mohd. Sadiq (later the Chief Minister of the State), was the President of the National Cultural Front.

20. The great credit goes to Professor S.K. Toshkhani who compiled the Kashmiri Dictionary (in Urdu-Kashmiri script); after the publication of George Grierson's dictionary in Roman and Devanagri scripts.

21. Jagan Nath Shivpuri was then the only authority in Kashmir on Indian classical music (vocal and instrumental). He was the founder of well-known institute Prem Sangeet Niketan in Srinagar ; that is now running in Jammu.

22. Motilal Kemu specialized himself in folk theatre of Kashmir, in which he made a significant research, innovations and additions. He strenuously worked with Bhagat Group of Badgam, the Baands of Vahthora village and wondering Damaal groups of Pakharpora.

23. Popular place in Srinagar, which is known to public as Pratap Park.

24. Bombur-Yembrzal is a popular love story where Love is destined to pine eternally.

BAKHSHALI MANUSCRIPT : The Oldest Birch-bark Sharada Manuscript

- S. N. Pandita

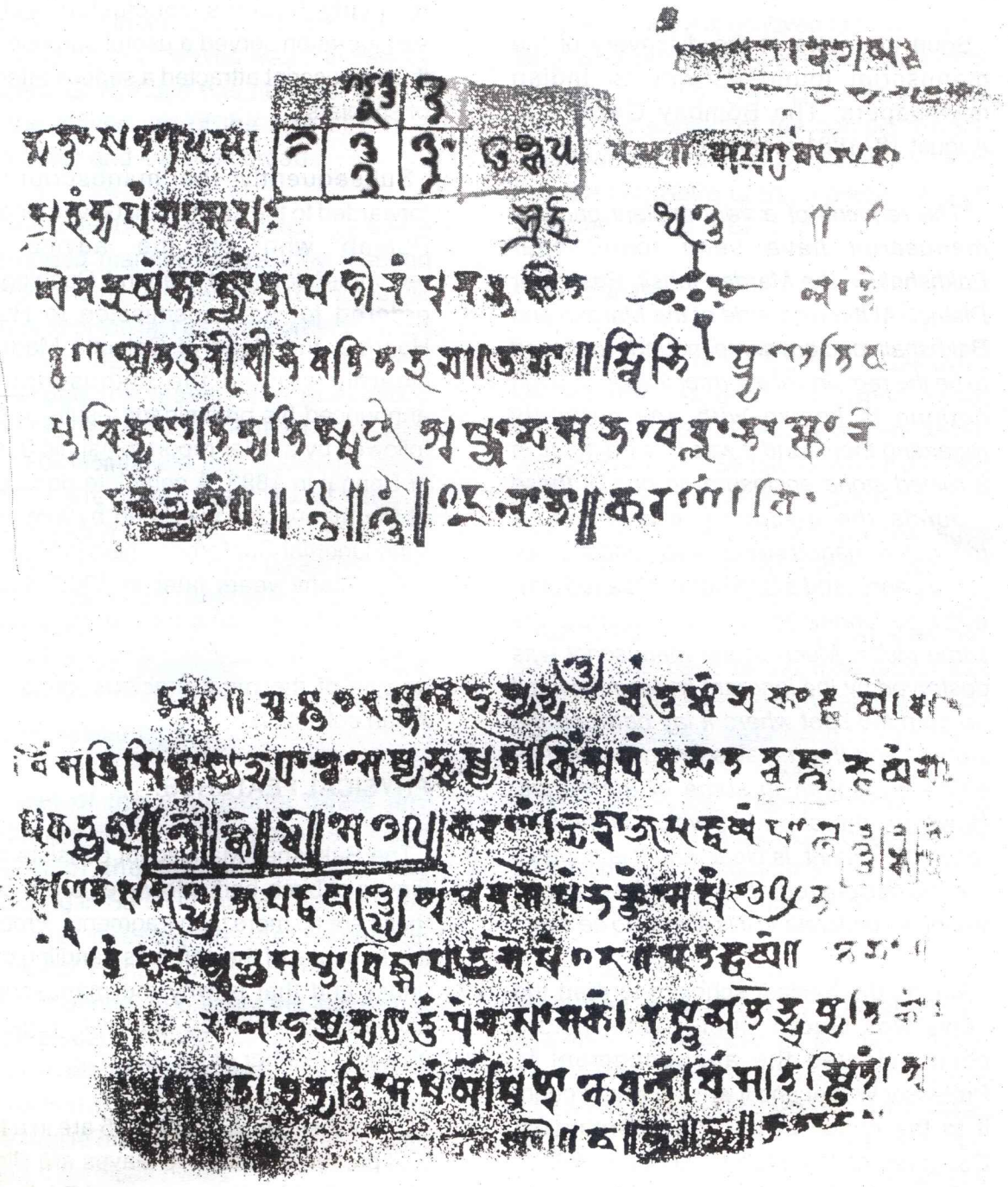
Of the very few early birch-bark manuscripts, the following namely are the best known- the Kharoshti Dhammapada from Khotan, the Bower Manuscript from Kuchar, the Kashmiri Athervaveda and the Deccan College Rig Veda manuscript. But the one which is the oldest written in Sharada character is the Bakhshali Manuscript. It was found in May 1881 at a village called Bakhshali near Mardan that falls in the Yusufzai Division of Peshawar District in the erstwhile North-Western Frontier Province of India. Situated on the river Mukham which joins the Kabul river near Nowshera, Bakhshali is 160 miles from Srinagar. It adjoins Jamalghari, Takht-i-Bhai and Charsada villages that formed the trans-Indus area within the Persian boundaries in ancient times and are well known for their Indo-Greek art treasures .

The Bakhshali Manuscript was dug out by a farmer in a ruined site where it lay between a mass of stones. In a letter dated June5, 1882 to Rudolf Horenle writes General Cunningham ," The birch-bark manuscript was found in a field near a well without trace of any building near the spot." Hoernle himself also contributed to this conclusion by stating, " As the west Indus districts were early lost to Hindu civilization through the Muhammadan conquests during which it was a common practice to bury manuscripts to save them from destruction."

The only authentic record of the discovery of Bakhshali Manuscript is preserved in a letter dated July 5, 1881 written by the Assistant Commissioner of Mardan which reads :

"In reply to your No 1306, dated 20th ultimo, and its enclosures, I have the honour to inform you that the remains of the papyrus manuscript referred to were brought to me by the Inspector of Police, Mian An- Wan-udin. The finder, a tenant of the latter, said he had found the manuscript while digging in a ruined stone enclosure on one of the mounds near Bakhshali. These mounds lie on the west side of the Mardan and Bakhshali roads and are evidently the remains of a former village. Close to the same spot the man found a triangular-shaped 'diwa' , a soap-stone pencil, and a large lota of baked clay with a perforated bottom. I had a further search made but nothing else was found.

"According to the finder's statement the greater part of the manuscript had been destroyed in taking it up from the place were it lay between the stones. The remains when brought to me were like dry tinder, and there may be about fifty pages left some of which would certainly legible to any one who knew the characters. The letters on some of the pages are very clear and look like some kind of Prakrit, but it is most difficult to separate the pages without injuring them. I had intended to forward the manuscript to the Lahore Museum in the hope that it might be sent on thence to some scholar, but I was unable to have a proper tin box made for it before I left Mardan. I will see to this on my return from leave. The papyrus will require very tender manipulation. The result will be interesting



Facsimiles of the folios of the Bakhshali Manuscript.
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if it enables us to judge the age of the ruins where the manuscript was found."

Soon the news of the discovery of the manuscript found its way to Indian newspapers. The Bombay Gazette of August 13, 1881 reported:

"The remains of a very ancient papyrus manuscript have been found near Bakhshali, in the Mardan tahsil, Peshawar District. At the west side of the Mardan and Bakhshali road are some mounds, believed to be the remains of a former village, though nothing is known with any certainty regarding them, and it was while digging in a ruined stone enclosure on one of these mounds the discovery was made. A triangular-shaped stone 'diwa', and a soap-stone pencil ,and a large lotah of baked clay, with a perforated bottom., were found at the same place. Much of the manuscript was destroyed by the ignorant finder in taking it up from the spot where it lay between the stones; and the remains are described as being dry tinder, in some of the pages. However, the charater, which somewhat resemble Prakrit, is clear, and it is hoped it may be deciphered when it reaches Lahore, wither we understand it is shortly to be sent."

Among the earliest scholars to read the news was Georg Buhler who in turn communicated the announcement to Professor Weber and it was he who brought it to the notice of the Vth International Congress of Orientalists which was then underway in Berlin. As Buhler's letter to Weber states that the manuscript was found "carefully enclosed in a stone chamber" it was assumed that the newly discovered manuscript might prove to be "one of the Triptikas which Kanishka had ordered to be deposited in Stupas". Though later it became clear that there was nothing to justify Bhuler's conclusion, yet the exaggeration served a useful purpose, that the manuscript attracted a serious attention of scholars.

Subsequently the manuscript was forwarded to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab who on the advice and recommendation of General Cunningham ordered for its transmission to Rudolf Hoernle, the Head of Calcutta Madrasa. Hoernle studied the manuscript and announced his preliminary results in 1882 followed by a fuller report to Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1883. A complete description of the manuscript was read by him at the VIIth Oriental Conference held in Vienna in 1886. Many years later in 1902 Hoernle presented the manuscript to the Bodleian Library in Oxford where it remains till date as one of the most precious items in its Asian collection.

PHYSICAL FEATURES:

The Bakhshali Manuscript consists of 70 leaves of birch-bark. However, a few out of these are no more than fragments. Probably it is because of the careless handling of the finder and that is why the manuscript is excessively mutilated both with regard to size and number of leaves.

Out of the total 70 leaves, 35 are in a fairly well preserved state. 16 leaves are slightly damaged , 11 are scrapes and 7 folios are much mutilated. Folio No 19 is completely blank. Some leaves are stuck together. According to Hoernle , "the original size of the leaves was 7 by 8 inches. His estimate was based on the fact that " old birch-bark

manuscripts were always written on leaves of squarish size." Hoernle however, revised his original estimate and concluded that the size of manuscript leaves was 7 inches by 4 inches. G. R. Kaye has however opined that the leaves are of the size of 6 to 7 inches long and 4 inches broad.

The leaves of the manuscript were in a disarranged manner before they reached Hoernle and he himself also did not leave any record of the fact as to the order in which the leaves had reached him . Hoernle rearranged the leaves and guessed a proper sequence about them but it was later seen to be incomplete. The Bodleian Library order of the folios was fixed after a considerable labour and scientific reasoning. However, it may be appreciated that the serial order given to the leaves can not be assumed to be the actual original order. It is in fact an outcome of compromise and approximation and is based on text that deals on similar topics.

No leaf of the manuscript bears any numbering. In fact the part (left hand margin) of the leaf where generally numbering in Sanskrit manuscripts is to be seen are missing in the Bakhshali Manuscript. Hence, there is no evidence of such numbering. At present the leaves are preserved between the sheets of mica and kept in an album. It has been suggested by experts that in order to ensure the longevity of the fragile manuscript it could as well be mounted on glass plates.

TEXT :

The entire text of the Bakhshali Manuscript is written in Sharada script. The beginning and the end of the manuscript are lost. Hence, both the name of the work and of its author are unknown. However, from all its appearance it is believed to have been a large work perhaps divided into chapters or sections and the existing leaves are only the middle portion of the complete work. This fact is supported by Hoernle's claim that the first Sutra of the manuscript is 9th and the last one is 57th.

LANGUAGE :

The language of the text of the Bakhshali Manuscript has been confirmed as an irregular Sanskrit in which however all the words used are Sanskrit. While the text follows rules of Sanskrit grammar and prosody yet it is seen in several passages that they are followed with some laxity. The writing is however good and it has been established to be written by at least two scribes. The parts of the manuscript that have been preserved are entirely concerned with mathematics. According to Hoernle, " It contains a great variety of problems related to daily life. The method prescribed in the rules of the solution of these problems is extremely mechanical and reduce the labour of thinking to a minimum."

The rules are explained in a very specific language and are fully explained by examples. Generally in the text of the manuscript, it is observed that each rule is explained by two examples. Yet in few cases as many as fifteen examples have been cited to explain the particular rules. The rules and examples are written in verse. The explanatory solutions and other details pertaining to questions are written in prose. The subject matter of the entire text is divided in Sutras in which rule comes first and example next which is designated by

the word Udharana. Examples are explained through notations called Sthapanas. This is followed by a solution termed as Karana. The proofs are designated by the word Pratyaya. Although the system of notations used in the Bakhshali Manuscript is much the same as has been found in mathematical works of Bhaskara and Brahma Gupta yet there are some very important exceptions that we encounter in the Bhakshali Manuscript.

The negative sign (-) is shown like our modern sign of plus (+) and also by placing a dot (.) over a number. No other earlier text of mathematics in India shows this deviation. Division is indicated by placing one number under another number without a horizontal line between them. Multiplication is indicated by placing one number beside the other without any sign. Addition is indicated by the word *yu*. Similarly the word *mu* is used for square and *pha* for total. To indicate a part , the notation used is *bha*. Dot (.) is used variously to indicate an unknown number or sometimes a Zero.

Although the Bhakshali Manuscript is a mathematical work, it would however, be wrong to state that it is a pure arithmetical text book. No algebraic symbolism is employed in the entire text and yet the work can be divided into algebraic arithmetical and geometrical portions. However, there is no clear cut distinction of these sections which in general deal with academic, commercial and miscellaneous problems. It is a common place of matter to come across notations of large numbers and in one particular instance it runs into 23 digits.

OTHER SPECIAL FEATURES :

Scholars in general have debated as to whether the Bakhshali Manuscript is purely of Indian origin or not, but there is complete agreement in their assessment that the work is Indian in form and written in Sanskrit. Many of the mathematical examples in the manuscript contain references to Gods, men, deities and even semi-historical beings. And similar is the case that we find a sprinkle of references to legends, animals, crops and metallic objects.

In the text of the manuscript one frequently encounters with names like Siva, Vasudeva, Siddha, Rakhsakas, Suras and Asuras who figure in many problems. The name of Sita is though not preserved in the text yet there is an example based upon her abduction by Ravana. The question related to the legend in the text of the manuscript states; " the wife of Rama was carried off through the air by Ravana and that in order to attract the attention of her helpers she tied some jewelry in a garment and dropped it to earth." Thus this circumstance forms substance of a very interesting problem given in some part of the text of the Bakhshali Manuscript.

Similarly names like Partha, Arjuna, Yudhisthara, Satrudama (Satrughna), Sundari and Chhajaka are mentioned in the text of the manuscript. It is interesting to mention here that a part of the manuscript is reportedly written by a Brahmin, the son of Chhajakka who some scholars believe to be same as Sajjaka who is mentioned in the Rajatarangini and was a contemporary of Kalhana.

Besides these names of individuals, there are references tc various classes of men

like kings, priests, princes, pandits, servants, bankers, merchants, Brahmans and Rajputs. References to animals in the text of the problems is limited to elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes and snakes. There is a singular reference to a worm and a vulture. Two classes of horses have been referred to, one as Hayas and other Asvas. Camels have been ascribed as Ushtna.

According to Hoernle, Haya stood for a Yak. Mention of food articles like barley, rice, saffron, is not uncommon in the text. Other commodities included are gold, iron, salt etc. The references to religious matters are far and few ,yet they are significant by mention of Siva, Deva, Vasudeva, and terms like Paraloka, Paramatma and Shristi are also occasionally encountered.

CONTENT :

In its present state the entire content of the Bakhshali Manuscript has been classified into following segments.

- Problems involving system of Linear Equations.
- Arithmetical Progression.
- Quadratic Equations.
- Evaluation of Square Roots of Complex Series.
- Calculations that deal with the purity of gold and Mensuration.
- Problems of income, expenditure, profit and loss along with a miscellaneous section.

According to G. R. Kaye, " In my first examination of the manuscript, I noticed that writing was not uniform and that in particularly certain leaves differentiated themselves from the rest by a bolder and on the whole a better style of handwriting." It is therefore pretty certain that the manuscript is written by more than one scribe. There are as well indications that other portions of the manuscript were dictated and hence the question of actual authorship of the manuscript remains inconclusive.

A part of the manuscript is peculiarly Hindu in contrast with the remainder of the manuscript. The method of exposition of the problems discussed in the manuscript is somewhat different. Examples are followed by statements and the given answers do not indicate any detailed working. Thus generally answers bear no proof or verification. However, there are some exceptions.

EVALUATION OF ORIGIN & HISTORY:

Although the manuscript was found at Bakhshali, it however remains uncertain that it originated there. The evidence of the script limits the find to areas like Gandhara, Kashmir, Kangra and territories nearby. It is important here to mention that the question of origin of the Bakhshali Manuscript was discussed and judged in some haste to begin with. The results announced by Weber on the authority of Buhler at the Vth International Oriental Congress were not based on real scientific knowledge and experts like Kaye have gone on record and to the extent of saying, " We do not therefore feel bound to treat the pronouncement of these eminent scholars on this particular subject with the reverence that is usually due to them."

It must be mentioned here that Hoernle concluded that the Bakhshali Manuscript was connected to Jainas or Budhists, but Kaye holds entirely a different view in the matter. According to him "there is not the

slightest evidence to indicate it being so." However now it is more than confirmed that the manuscript is Hindu (Saivite) and the author was a Brahmin. This is also borne by the fact that offering to Siva are mentioned on more than one occasion and to Siva himself is attributed the gift of calculations to the human race . Many references are incidental to various persons named in different Hindu epics. Hence, there is no doubt that the Bakhshali Manuscript is Hindu in context and theme and not a single reference indicates its connection with the Buddhism or Jainism.

On the contrary the manuscript has connection with Muslim mathematicians. There is an interesting similarity in parts of the Bakhshali Manuscript and the arithmetical work of Akhmin. These are problems of the type which have been established to have their traces in Greek sources. This evidence of western influence however does not make the Bakhshali Manuscript a work of non-Indian origin. The general conclusion among the scholars is "that the work is mainly Indian but it shows sign of outside influence and it gives rather a special prominence to the non- Indian material used."

Hoernle held the view that the mathematical treatise which is written out in the so-called Bakhshali Manuscript was considerably older than the manuscript itself. He writes, " The country in which Bakhshali lies and which formed part of the Hindu Kingdom of Kabul was early lost to Hindu civilization through the conquests of the Mohammedan rulers of Ghazni and especially through the celebrated expeditions of Mahmud towards the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century A. D. In those troublous times it was a common practice of the learned Hindus to bury their manuscript treasures. Possibly the Bakhshali Manuscript may be one of these. In any case it cannot well be placed later than the 10th century A. D. It is quite possible that it may be somewhat older."

In fact Hoernle assumed that Bakhshali Manuscript was not written after the time of Mahmud. However, with regard to his conclusion on the "burial custom" of the manuscript G. R. Kaye held a slightly different view. Writes Kaye, " Regarding the alleged burial custom I can say nothing. It may have been prevalent among learned Hindus but there is not the slightest evidence to show that the Bakhshali Manuscript was deliberately buried."

DIALECT & METRE:

With regard to the language and metre employed in the Bakhshali Manuscript, Hoernle concluded: " The Bakhshali arithmatic is written in that peculiar language which used to be called the Gatha dialect but which is rather the literary form of the ancient North- Western Prakrit or Pali. It exhibits a strange mixture of what we should now call Sanskrit and Prakrit forms. Its use therefore in the Bakhshali Manuscript points to a date not later than the 3rd or 4th century A. D. for the composition of the work".

About the metre used in the Bakhshali Manuscript, writes Hoernle , " It appears that the earliest mathematical works were written in the Sloka measure but from about the end of the 5th century A. D. it became the fashion to use the Arya measure. Aryabhatta 500 A. D. , Varha Mihra C 550, Brahma Gupta 630 A. D. , all wrote in the

latter measure. Not only were new works written in it but Sloka works were revised and recast in it. Now the Bakhshali arithmetic is written in the Sloka measure and this circumstance carries its compilation back to a time anterior to that change of literary fashion in the 5th century A. D".

On these assumptions Kaye held a different view. In his paper published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1912, writes Kaye, "On the whole the Bakhshali symbols resemble most closely those of the Devi-ri-kothi Fountain inscription of A. D. 1159. The Bakhshali "four" most closely resembles the example in No 15 Chamba which probably belongs to the 11th century". It is a matter of special pride for the present writer to mention that the Devi-ri-kothi Fountain inscription was read by his grandfather (Prof .Nityanand Shastri) in 1905 A. D. at the request of Professor Jean Philippe Vogel, the celebrated Dutch Indologist who was then enumerating the antiquities of Chamba between 1902 to 1910 A. D.

From the a-fore mentioned account it seems probable to date Bakhshali Manuscript to about the 12th century. The script, language and the contents of the work, all point to this period. As the contents of the manuscript bear references to Bhaskara (b. 1114 A. D.), Ummar Khayam, who lived in the 12th century, Adelard of Bath visited Cordova in 1120, Leonardo was born in 1175 A. D. and it was during this period that the Bakhshali work in all likelihood was composed. An exceedingly analytical analysis of the fully developed Sharada alphabet and those encountered in the Bakhshali Manuscript have been dealt in detail by Kaye in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1900 A. D.

This paper is based on original quotes and information taken from the following sources.

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Facsimiles of the folios of the Bakhshali Manuscript:

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A NOTE ON SOME IMPORTANT MANUSCRIPTS OF KASHMIR IN INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIES.

- S. N. Pandita

It has been settled in the men's mind and accepted universally that Kashmir has been worthy of having the first place in the intellectual spheres. In spite of perils that the land encountered by way of devastation and destruction of records down its long history, its indefatigable perseverance and intrepidity enabled it to overcome all obstacles and dangers, as a result, it continued to shape the intellectual destiny of India through the ages and its influence spread far and wide.

For this reputation credit goes to the Pandits of Kashmir -known throughout history for their cerebral graces and having made seminal contributions to literature, religion and art of India. Thereby they have left an indelible mark on the canvas of Indian ethos by producing a vast amount of written treatises. Even though it were the Pandits themselves who wrote a vast amount of the literature, yet the credit of appreciating the wealth of their manuscripts goes to western scholars who first came to Kashmir at the beginning of the last quarter of the 19th century and frequented up to first three decades of the 20th century. It was during these five intervening decades that they collected and collated these manuscripts and brought them to light thereby making these treasure stores of Sanskrit learning of India available to scholars throughout the world.

The first notable endeavour towards this direction was undertaken by the famous German scholar and manuscript collector Georg Buhler. During his memorable tour to Kashmir in 1875 he collected 300 manuscripts of the original stock (only a few were copies) that existed then in Kashmir. Most of this collection found its way into the Government collection in Bombay. A few pieces subsequently took flight to the universities of Berlin, Vienna and Tubingen.

However, the most important manuscript then available in Kashmir was that of the Atherveveda- a single copy of the Paipilada Shakha. It was before Buhler's arrival in Kashmir that the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir- Ranbir Singh had sent this manuscript to Sir William Muier, the then Lieutenant Governor. Sir Muier had sought its procurement for Rudolph Von Roth of the Tubingen University in Germany. Roth through scholarly and quasi official channels had persuaded the British authorities in India to try and locate this manuscript in Kashmir. Following a search, the manuscript was located to be in the possession of Pandit Keshav Bhat Zadoo who in the first instant refused to part with it pleading that sale of a cow, daughter and a book were prohibited by Shastras to a Brahman. But succumbing to the pressure and other inducements, he finally agreed to part with the rare manuscript only after preparing two copies of it,- one for himself and the other for the Royal library. Thereafter the original birch bark manuscript- a messy bundle of 287 leaves held together by a cord passing through the middle of the leaves was restored and properly bound, following which it was sent to Rudolph Von Roth. Later on Roth's death in 1895 it became one of the greatest treasures of the Tubingen University. And ever since it remains so. The records suggest that the manuscript was

sent on loan basis but the truth today is that even after 130 years when it was sent to Germany it still adorns the shelves of the Tubingen University. It is also pertinent here to recall that of this version of the Athervaveda, it was the only copy that existed.

Under the title of Panchtantra there has been current in India for more than 2500 years a collection of ancient Hindu popular tales in which the substance of stories embodied is even older than that. These stories owe their origin to Gunadhya's work of seven lac verses composed in Paisachi language supposedly written by him in his own blood. But the monumental work did not find the favour of the royalty because the tales were written in a tongue that was unknown to the king. Thereafter ,out of frustration, Gunadhya is reported to have burnt the pages that made for six lac verses. But just before all the verses too could have been consigned to flames the remaining one lac verses were retrieved by his disciples and promised to be preserved and rendered into Sanskrit.

Thus the original work known as Vrihat Katha was versified into Sanskrit and later recomposed by Kshemendra as Vrihat Katha Manjiri. And some 900 years ago another great Kashmiri scholar Somadeva Bhat rewrote it and gave it the name of Katha Sarit Sagar. It is the tales of Katha Sarit Sagar that in fact make for the tales of Panchtantra. With the European interest initiated about this great Kashmiri treatise by Benfey, it was however left to Ernst Windisch of Leipzig to arrange for its publication in 1903. Windisch carried out this work through his pupil Johannes Hertel. Of the multitudinous Indian versions of the work, one of the most important was that which Hertel discovered among the manuscripts loaned to him by the Deccan College, Poona. It was the oldest known Sanskrit manuscript titled Tantrakhyayaka and dated about 200 B. C. According to Hertel, " Pandit Sahajabhatta discovered the manuscript of this fine old text." Hertel prepared a critical edition of Tantrakhyayaka and translated it into German in 1910 and thus brought to light one of the masterpieces of Kashmiri literature. Today its manuscript adorns the shelves of the Leipzig University in Germany.

Prior to his appointment in India as the Government Epigraphist, Norwegian linguist Sten Konow while still at the University of Kristiana, now called the University of Oslo, Norway, edited Rajachekera's Karpuramanjiri- a drama by the 900 A. D Indian poet Rajachekera. It was based on the Kashmiri manuscript of the work obtained by him through Aurel Stein's help. Of this fact writes Konow,

"I owe the possession of the transcript to the kindness of Dr Stein who had his assistant Pandit Sahajabhatta make it for me." This work was published by Harvard University Press in 1901 and its manuscript today embellishes the collection of the Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

Among the most notable Kashmiri works, Aurel Stein collected during his long labour and stay in Kashmir were the manuscripts of Sahib Ram's Rajatarangini and the Nilamatapurana written by an unknown scribe. This manuscript of the Rajatarangini were the original notes of the author's continuation of the Rajatarangini containing an account of Kashmir under the Sikh rule

and a narration of events in Ranbir Singh's time. Another manuscript of the Rajatarangini that Stein collected was that of Pandit Damodar's Rajatarangini Pancamanigadpadyamayi. Of this manuscript, Stein recorded in 1892 following the death of Pandit Damodar, "My lamented friend had set himself the task of continuing the Rajatarangini from the time of Akbar to the present date and from what I have seen of the parts composed, I may say that had he been spared to complete it, his work would have shown that Kalhana could have found for generations past no worthier successor." Both these manuscripts prove that writing history in the Rajatarangini tradition was continued till as late as about a century ago.

Of the manuscript of the Nilamatapurana, it was bound in leather and bought from Pandit Kantha Bhat in 1905 by Aurel Stein through the kind assistance of Pandit Sahajabhatta. This manuscript was known to Stein since 1891. It was this manuscript which made the basis of the first European edition of the Nilamatapurana prepared by K. De. Vreese and was published from Holland in 1936. About this manuscript writes Stein, "This text of the Nilamatapurana is the best known to me and should serve as basis for a future edition." Not only was it the best manuscript, it was also the oldest as well. Today both these manuscripts of the Rajatarangini and that of the Nilamatapurana are lying in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, along with more than 350 other Sanskrit manuscripts of Kashmir that Stein collected from Kashmir between 1888 to 1905 and deposited in Oxford in 1911.

Evidence indicates that Aurel Stein himself had prepared a revised version of the Rajatarangini and had intended to publish it with photographic illustrations. The manuscript completed in 1942 was sent to the Oxford University Press for publication. Today it remains in the confines of aborted publications of the Oxford University. Not only the manuscript of the revised version of the Rajatarangini bears great significance that of the Lokaprakasa –a great work of 11th century polyhistor Kshemendra entails importance. Like the Rajatarangini-the political history of old Kashmir, the Nilamatapurana- the cultural history of ancient Kashmir, the Lokaprakasa completes the triology of Kashmir's past. Lokaprakasa deals with the ancient governance and financial structure of old Kashmir. This work based on the best manuscript on the subject was translated with commentary in Sanskrit by eminent Kashmiri scholar Pandit Sahajabhatta in 1905. At Aurel Stein's initiative it was later sent for publication to Paris under the auspices of the Asiatique Societae. However, due to the eruption of the First World War, its publication was interrupted midway. The manuscript today embellishes the library of the Asiatique Societae in Paris.

Of the other important Kashmir manuscripts include those of the Mahabharata, Mahanaya Prakasa and Lallavakyani. The manuscripts of the Mahabharata were collected by the famous German scholar Maurice Winternitz who with the help of these manuscripts prepared his far-famed edition of the great India epic. It was published from Prague, Chezcoslovakia in 1927. The original Kashmiri manuscripts of the said work today grace the shelves of the Prague University.

The manuscript of the Sanskrit translation of the oldest written Kashmiri work Mahanaya Prakasa along with its commentary found its way in 1921 into Sir George Grierson's collection in Glengery in Ireland. It was on the basis of this manuscript of Mahanaya Prakasa, Grierson elucidated the history of Kashmiri language in his book entitled The Language of Mahanaya Prakasa- A Specimen of written Kashmiri in the 15th century. It was published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta in 1929.

While it is well known that Lalded's sayings were published in London in 1920 by Sir George Grierson and Lionel Barnett form the manuscript prepared by Pandit Mukund Ram in 1914, yet the best manuscripts of her sayings were collected by Aurel Stein much earlier and deposited them in the Oxford collection along with his other manuscripts in 1911. However in preparing their edition of the Lallavakyani ,Grierson and Barnett made use of Stein's manuscripts. Today these manuscripts form part of the Stein collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Not alone the important manuscripts of Kashmiri works adorn the great libraries of England and America, that of Basakavi's works translated into English in 1913 by Pandit Jagaddhar Zadoo were used by Russian scholar Victor Meirworth and his wife Lydmil Meirworth for the preparation of the Russian translation of Basakavi's works. At present the manuscript of Pandit Jagaddhar's translation embellishes the University of Leningrad. In 1935, the great American Indophile, Carl Keller, who held the record of collecting all the translations of the famous 17th century Spanish classic Don Quixote of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra,in which the famous world classic was translated till the 4th decade of the last century, sought for the Kashmiri and Sanskrit translations of the book since he did not have these in his collection. With the help and assistance of Aurel Stein he obtained both the desired translations prepared by Pandit Nityanand Shastri and Pandit Jagaddhar Zadoo . The manuscripts of both these translations were sent to Keller in 1936. Today these manuscripts adorn the Library of the Harvard University, Boston, USA and are considered amongst the best relics of Indian heritage in the west. Incidentally the two translations are the first ever prepared for this great European classic into any Indian language.

From this brief account it is clear that for a long time, Kashmiri scholarship has been the beacon light of learning, the impact of which can evidently be seen in the facets of the temples of learning all over the world. These facets which have operated over centuries and moulded Kashmiri scholarship in this manner are so appealing that they never failed to attract the attention of the global learning and scholarship. The remarkable attainments in literary pursuits have thus duly earned Kashmiris a great role in the national and global society for integrating cultural bonds among the nations. This has also contributed immensely to the oneness of mankind for harmonious and peaceful living. However, these trends are not confined alone to the field of learning and scholarship but they are also found in their culture, language, history, food, dress and tastes as well. Hence the role of Kashmiris in fostering global peace and harmony transcends time and geographical barriers.

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